

Arpeggio Meditation Tutorial - Daniel Ward

This is are the introductory notes I've used when giving a tutorial on Daniel Ward's "Arpeggio Meditation" piece.

Goals:

- I want you to be able to play something pretty easy that sounds pretty hard
- An easy introduction to an easy fingerpicking pattern
- Something you can practice over and over again to teach your individual fingers how to play on their strings without having to think too much about it
- How and why to play chord shapes a little differently

First lesson from Daniel Ward's "Ukulele Arpeggio meditations" book / video series

Diving in:

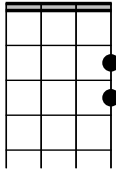
Chord shapes:

- C, with pinky, but the ring finger ready to go
- Cmaj7 with ring
- Amadd9 with middle+ring (add middle)
- Am with middle+ ring + pinky (add pinky)
 - Keep the extra fingers down, even though you don't need them!
 - The goal is to play "legato", smoothly, without interruption
- F with all 4 fingers (add index)
 - Including the C on the A string!
- (half bar!) G7sus4 with all 4 (moving middle)
- (half bar!) G7 with index, middle ring (remove pinky)
- C with pinky (switch index, middle, ring for pinky)
- Fm (add index and middle)
- back to C with pinky (remove index and middle)

Ad nauseam

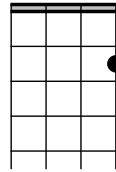
C*

(with ring + pinky)



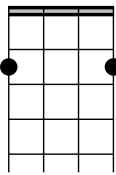
Cmaj7

(remove pinky)



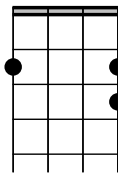
Amadd9

(add middle)



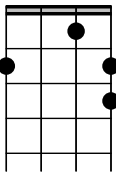
Am

(add pinky back)



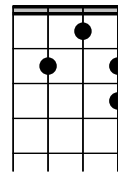
F

(add index)



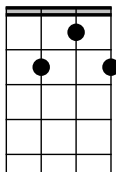
G7sus4

(move middle over)



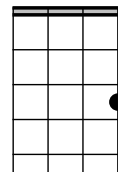
G7

(remove pinky)



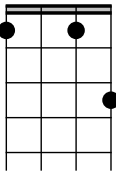
C

(remove all, replace pinky)



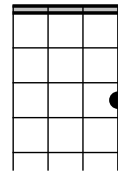
Fm

(add middle and index)



C

(remove middle and index)



Arpeggiating:

- What is an arpeggio?
- Play a chord, but only 1 note at a time
 - let each note ring out as much as possible
 - move each finger at the last possible moment
 - which is why moving as little as possible is important!
- pick one string at a time, G, C, E, A, with thumb, index, middle, ring
 - P - thumb
 - I - index
 - M - middle
 - A - ring
- focus on taking the same amount of time between every pick

An interlude on Meditation:

- I don't know Daniel Ward's philosophy, but I can speak on how I feel about this
- Taking some time to deliberately stop thinking about other things and focus on one thing
 - Intentionality of what your mind is on
 - If your brain tries to run off and do other things DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT
 - Note that it happens, and decide what to do about it
 - Your brain is trying to help! Maybe it's got something you DO need to think about!
 - Maybe it's telling you something that you DON'T need to think about
 - Acknowledge what happened – were you thinking of something, or feeling something? What was it?
 - Practice! A little bit of practice will help you think deliberately a little, and a lot of practice will help you think deliberately a lot
- No magic
- BREATHE
 - When doing something new, or hard, or interesting, it's easy to tense up and hold your breath
 - Deliberately get some practice doing something and breathing at the same time
 - This may feel new for some people!
 - It might seem a bit like walking and chewing bubble gum at the same time
 - * Which sounds easier than it is
- A little bit of practice will help you a little, a lot will help you a lot

Resume!

NOW, deliberately going back to what we were on before I let us get distracted

- Pick one string at a time G, C, E, A, with thumb finger, middle, and index
- Focus on taking the same amount of time between every pick
 - metronome if you want one
- Work on that on that open, or with a C chord first
- Faster and faster gradually
- Throw in some dynamics and tempo changes
 - put the emphasis on different strings!

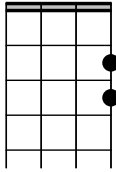
Once you're picking the individual strings as consistently as you like (maybe after 5 minutes of practice! Pick a time and stick with it):

Spend a little time on the chord shapes again to refresh!

Ad nauseam

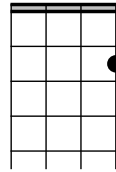
C*

(with ring + pinky)



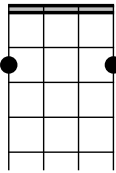
Cmaj7

(remove pinky)



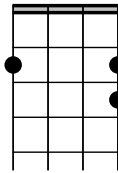
Amadd9

(add middle)



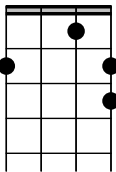
Am

(add pinky back)



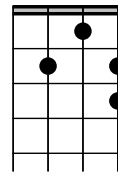
F

(add index)



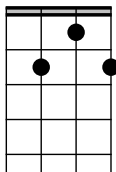
G7sus4

(move middle over)



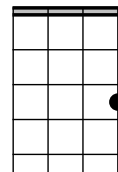
G7

(remove pinky)



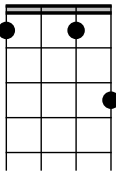
C

(remove all, replace pinky)



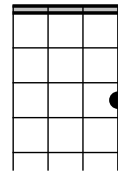
Fm

(add middle and index)



C

(remove middle and index)



Now that the chord shapes are pretty fresh, and the finger picking pattern is pretty fresh, “just” do both at the same time.

- Go slowly!
- Try adjusting different parts depending on what parts need practice
 - Play twice as many bars of every chord if you want more practice the finger picking without worrying about transitioning chords as often
 - As your fingerpicking builds strength, finger pick faster, so you have to transition the chords faster, and get more practice
 - The two parts will reinforce each other as they each get better at staying out of the way of the other happening naturally